

# A WHITE STREAK OF DISASTER

BY EDGAR FRANKLIN



## Amazing Are Adventures of the "Biggest Man in Entire Town"

### CHAPTER I.

#### The Biggest Man in Town.

THOMAS, doorman of the Kenyonville Club, laid his hand upon the knob with a slightly exaggerated flourish; the big plate-glass affair swung inward, and Thomas bowed.

"Good evening, Mr. Grafton, Sir!"

The tall, brisk man in the long, light overcoat stepped across the sill; his shorter companion followed, blinking, into the wide and brilliant hallway of the new clubhouse.

This tall man, Grafton, seemed to be a personage of the first water; his bearing bespoke him as the walking incarnation of prosperity. Square of shoulder and erect of head, he carried quite unconsciously an air of mastery and broad possessions; of the ability to command and the intention of using that ability; even his walk held the swing and sureness of the self-confident, successful man of affairs.

And yet there was not the faintest suggestion of arrogance in his mien. His eye twinkled humorously and his voice was big and hearty. Grafton, in short, was simply a good, whole-souled American citizen who had paddled his own canoe to the gold mine at the headwaters of the stream.

THAT he was popular became evident almost upon the instant. From a dozen points a dozen smiling men stepped forward at the sight of him and a dozen hands were outstretched in his direction.

"Good evening, Mr. Grafton!"

"Hello, Grafton!"

"Oh, I say, Grafton, did you see Carter about that—"

Grafton shook them off with a good-natured laugh.

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen! No, busi-

ness this evening for me. I'm tired—we've been to the comic opera at the Empire, and it was an exertion. Now we're here for a little relaxation before bedtime."

One of the waiting attendants relieved him of his coat and, as an afterthought, took that of the smaller man also. Grafton turned to this latter individual and laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Gentlemen—Hicks and Blatchford and Gilchrist, and all the rest of you—"

## Popularity Grafton Has Is Shown

Let me introduce Mr. Elford, of Chicago. He was passing through Kenyonville on his way to St. Louis, and just stopped over to see what we'd been doing in the last ten years.

"And was he impressed?"

Grafton laughed.

"He seemed to be. Eh, Elford?"

"All things considered," said the visitor, "Kenyonville has done wonders—that's about all I can say in the bewilderment of the moment. The whole town is a marvel."

"But Kenyonville hasn't done it!"

He broke in one enthusiastic voice. "Grafton did all of it, Mr. Elford!"

"Hah!"

"It's the truth, whether he admits it or not," added another. "If it hadn't been for Grafton, Kenyonville would have—"

"Harney!" said the tall man, good-naturedly. Then he took Elford's arm and led him away from the crowd.

"You needn't pay much attention to that, you know, Jim."

"Needn't I, though?" laughed the other. "I'm inclined to think that it's pretty near being the truth."

Grafton shook his head and led the way to a little nook of his own, a small round table which stood in the shadow of some palms.

"There—my customary hang-out when in need of solitude and peace," he said. "Make yourself comfortable."

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